Seafood industry hopeful over Rs 50,000 cr export target as 21\textsuperscript{st} India International Seafood Show opens in Margao

\textbf{Margao, Jan 27:} Stakeholders from across the Indian seafood industry have voiced their optimism about marine products exports achieving a milestone Rs 50,000 cr target in the next few years given the current growth curve and strides made in aquaculture production, as the 21\textsuperscript{st} edition of the biennial India International Seafood Show opened in Margao today.

Goa Chief Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar who inaugurated the three-day flagship trade event organized by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA and the Seafood Export Association of India (SEAI), said that while the east coast, especially Andhra Pradesh was leaping ahead in culture fisheries, the fishing communities in the west coast can, in coordination with organizations like MPEDA, enhance their contribution to exports.

Shri Parrikar said India should also do more to make use of the fishing potential along the underutilized but large Andaman and Nicobar coastline, explore sustainable deep sea fishing and address issues such as seawater pollution from chemical fertilizer wash-off, overexploitation of existing fishing zones and damage to breeding grounds.

"India has the potential to become a seafood superpower and the goal of 20\% growth or doubling of the export volumes will not be as difficult if we tap into this potential fully,” he said.

IISS, which is coming back to Goa after 15 years, is expected to draw over 3,000 delegates and more than 2,000 domestic and international visitors over the three days, generating business and showcasing products, automation technologies and machinery as India continues to ride a crest of seafood exports growth.

In 2016-17 India has exported 11,34,948 MT of seafood, principally frozen shrimp and frozen fish, worth 37,870.90 crores and provisional export figures for April-November 2017 have shown an increase of 18.72\% and 15.16\% respectively in quantity and value (in US Dollars) of seafood exports.

The export earnings are expected to cross a high of US$ 6 billion during the current fiscal, buoyed by aquaculture growth, enhanced processing capacity and favourable market conditions, MPEDA Chairman Dr A. Jayathilak noted.

“If we are able to sustain our efforts in production and augment the efforts to value add, India can become the second largest exporter of seafood next to China within a few years surpassing countries like Norway, Vietnam, US or Thailand,” he added.
Goa’s Minister for Agriculture Shri Vijai Sardesai, who presided over the function pointed to overexploitation as a major concern and called for proactive measures to avoid situations like the “fish famine” affecting southeast Asian countries.

“As a small, progressive state Goa is taking strict measures such as ban on LED lights to curb damaging fishing practices, but bigger states also need to do their bit if we wish to have sustained exports,” he said.

Shri Vinoda Paliencar, the state’s Minister for Fisheries and Water Resources said they were planning to set up a Fisheries Corporation in Goa with the dual aim of increasing exports as well as ensuring that fish is available to domestic consumers at reasonable prices.

SEAI National President Shri V Padmanabham highlighted the challenges faced by seafood producers and exporters and hoped that the deliberations at IISS 2018 will help address some of these issues.

Goa’s leader of opposition Shri Babu Kavlekar, SEAI Goa President Shri M.M.Ibrahim, MPEDA Member and MP Shri K. Hari Babu also spoke.

’Safe & Sustainable Seafood from India’ is the focal theme of the three-day biennial exposition, which will see industry leaders and experts deliberate on policies, market trends and technology.

Delegates include exporters, machinery suppliers, importers, other service providers, researchers, policy makers etc. from India and countries such as the US, the UK, Spain, Japan, Australia, China, Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and the Middle East.

Internationally acclaimed experts from India and abroad will address technical sessions on topics of current interest. On Saturday, sessions were held on the role of technology and value addition in seafood marketing, on seafood safety requirements in major markets, and on GST implementation and its implications for the seafood sector.

Sessions were also held on international standards for live transportation of edible shrimp and fish and the use of e-commerce in international seafood marketing.

A separate session on Indian – EU Shrimp Dialogue in association with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands will be held on January 29th as part of the event.

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